

PROPOSAL FOR POTENTIAL ANNOUNCEABLE AT CLIMATE LEADERS SUMMIT

Name of Nominating Office and Department: U.S. EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management

Name of Program or Initiative: Addressing Climate Change through Materials Management: *A Strategy for a U.S. Circular Economy* and a New Voluntary National Goal to Reduce Climate Change Impacts from Materials

Point of Contact to Follow Up on Proposal: Nena Shaw, Director of the Resource Conservation and Sustainability Division, [[HYPERLINK "mailto:Shaw.Nena@epa.gov"](mailto:Shaw.Nena@epa.gov)], 202-564-5106

1. Rationale to Feature Program or Initiative (200 words or less):

According to the United Nations Environment Program's International Resource Panel, natural resource extraction and processing accounts for approximately 50 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.¹ As resource consumption has tripled over the past four decades,² reducing emissions from the production, use, consumption, and disposal of materials is critical to meeting the Paris Agreement 1.5°C target. EPA's *A Strategy for a U.S. Circular Economy* and its commitment to develop a voluntary national goal to reduce climate impacts from materials will help decouple economic growth from environmental degradation. A "circular economy" refers to a system of activities that is restorative to the environment, enables resources to maintain their highest values, and designs out waste. Applying circular economy strategies in five key areas (cement, aluminium, steel, plastics, and food) can achieve reductions in GHG emissions equivalent to eliminating all transportation sector emissions.³

2. Particular Regions or Countries of Focus for Program (if applicable):

The United States is the country of focus for EPA's strategy and goal, but the initiative supports international cooperation with countries within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), G7, and G20 who are working together on resource efficiency and the circular economy initiatives. It will also be supported by work to understand the climate impacts of materials performed by the United Nations Environment Program's International Resource Panel, as well as work with OECD countries to develop circular economy indicators.

3. Current Status of Program (e.g. in existence for X years; announced but not yet deployed; etc.):

EPA has spent decades developing data and information to support stakeholders in their efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials. *A Strategy for a U.S. Circular Economy*

¹ IRP, 2019. Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want. A Report of the International Resource Panel. United Nations Environment Programme. Nairobi, Kenya.

² UNEP, 2016. Global Material Flows and Resource Productivity. An Assessment Study of the UNEP International Resource Panel.

³ Ellen MacArthur Foundation and Material Economics, 2019. Completing the Picture: How the Circular Economy Tackles Climate Change.

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builds on EPA's existing efforts to maximize reductions in environmental impacts, such as climate change, from materials. This new strategy and the Agency's commitment to develop a new voluntary national goal to reduce climate impacts from materials use could be ready for Earth Day, April 22, 2021.

4. New Features or Funding to Announce for Program (100 words or less if applicable):

Along with releasing the new strategy and goal development, EPA could announce commitments to revise the strategy to identify additional actions needed to achieve large GHG emissions reductions from materials production, use, consumption, and disposal, and to collaborate within EPA and across the federal government to achieve these ambitious goals. Additionally, the White House could consider issuing a new executive order directing the federal government to undertake efforts to advance a circular economy in the United States.

5. If this announcement is part of a followup to a previous announcement, when was the previous announcement made?

As directed by the 116th Congress, EPA developed and posted for public comment a draft *National Recycling Strategy* on October 5th, 2020. *A Strategy for a U.S. Circular Economy* reframes the national recycling strategy around the circular economy, with commitments from EPA to go beyond recycling to achieve large greenhouse gas emissions reductions. On September 16, 2015, in alignment with Target 12.3 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the United States Department of Agriculture and EPA announced the first-ever domestic goal to reduce food loss and waste by half by the year 2030. EPA announced a voluntary goal on November 17, 2020 to increase the U.S. recycling rate to 50 percent by 2030. A new goal to reduce climate impacts from materials will complement the recycling and food loss and waste goals.

6. Key Success or Innovation of Program (150 words or less):

The United States could become an international leader by developing a voluntary national goal to reduce climate impacts from materials use. Most countries focus on recycling rates only, which do not help policymakers identify priority actions for addressing climate impacts from materials production, consumption, use and disposal. Additionally, announcing the strategy will be the first time the United States has stated that it will move towards a circular economy – a widely-adopted international approach representing a change from the linear economic approach of take, make, waste – that instead reduces materials use, redesigns materials to be less resource intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to serve as feedstock to manufacture new products.

7. Summary of Current Staffing Posture and/or Budget for Program/Announcement:

EPA's program to support the announcement of *A Strategy for a U.S. Circular Economy* and the development of a national voluntary goal to reduce climate change impacts from materials is fully staffed within the current existing budget.

DRAFT-DELIBERATIVE: INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION ONLY
INVENTORY OF U.S. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND SINKS: 1990-2019 REPORT COMMUNICATIONS
PLAN
March 30, 2021

Purpose

Each year, EPA prepares the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks (Inventory)*, which provides comprehensive information on national-level emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and nitrogen trifluoride going back to 1990. This impartial, policy neutral report, compiled annually since 1993, is due by April 15 of each year as part of the U.S. treaty obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. A draft of the report was released in February for public review, and the final report (covering 1990-2019) is expected to be published by April 15, 2021.

Audiences/Stakeholders

Interest primarily comes from industry, states, and researchers. No states, regions, tribes or specific communities will be impacted by this action.

The report was recently posted for a 30-day public review from February 12 to March 15, and 17 commenters submitted comments to EPA on a variety of topics, including oil and gas, wastewater, landfills, and field burning of agricultural residues in harvesting sugarcane. The comments received are consistent with ongoing engagement between stakeholders and EPA Inventory staff and have been addressed or integrated into ongoing improvements.

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Spokesperson(s)/Messenger(s)

Web update

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Template Revised: 07/30/2019
Supersedes: 04/05/2019

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Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Press Release:

EPA Publishes 28th Annual U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Template Revised: 07/30/2019
Supersedes: 04/05/2019

Activities & Deliverables

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Questions & Answers:

1. Are U.S. emissions rising or falling?

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

2. Why did emissions decrease from 2018 to 2019?

Template Revised: 07/30/2019
Supersedes: 04/05/2019

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

3. When will EPA report data for 2020?

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

4. What are recent trends in the transportation sector?

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

5. Are emissions from the oil and gas sector rising or falling?

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

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6. How is this program different than the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program/ Why does EPA have two GHG data programs?

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

7. You say you have incorporated new data and improved methods in this year's inventory. Has EPA revised estimates for prior years as well, and if so, how?

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

8. Atmospheric measurement studies show different emissions than EPA's Inventory. What is EPA doing to correct the Inventory?

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

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Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Template Revised: 07/30/2019
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More information on the report:

[HYPERLINK "<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/inventory-us-greenhouse-gas-emissions-and-sinks>"]

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9. During his campaign, Biden laid out some ambitious goals for renewable energy. Do these trends suggest that we could meet those goals?

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)



**Briefing Memo - BILATERAL CALL WITH U.K. MINISTER FOR
ENVIRONMENT *INTERNAL/DELIBERATIVE***

Printed on 04/08/2021

Filed: 5:37PM (FOR SCHEDULING)

BRIEFING MEMO

April 8, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR

FROM: JANE NISHIDA, OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AND TRIBAL
AFFAIRS, 202-564-1531, nishida.jane@epa.gov

SUBJECT: BILATERAL CALL WITH U.K. MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT

DATE: APRIL 12, 2021

TIME: 9:30-10:00am

I. REQUESTING OFFICE

Office of International and Tribal Affairs

II. TIMING

The UK was one of the first international partners to reach out and request a meeting. The Minister would like to establish a relationship with you and develop strong ties, especially given upcoming G7 Environment Ministers' Meeting (chaired by the U.K.), the G20 Environment Ministers' Meeting in July (chaired by Italy) and the U.K.-led Climate Conference of Parties (COP 26) negotiations in Glasgow in the fall.

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III. PURPOSE

Briefing on EPA's bilateral program with the United Kingdom, especially our close cooperation with the U.K. Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in advance of having a ministerial call scheduled for April 14. This call will be introductory in nature and will allow for an exchange of ideas regarding the upcoming G7 ministerial as well as an introduction to our bilateral engagement and potential areas of collaboration.

IV. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Your bilateral call with the U.K. on April 14 will be the first time speaking with your counterpart, Minister Zac Goldsmith. Minister Goldsmith, also addressed as Lord Goldsmith, recently sent a congratulatory letter to you expressing an interest in exploring how we can work together, encouraging enhanced bilateral cooperation as well as joint work in the multilateral context. Minister Goldsmith, a friend of the Prime Minister, has an unusual portfolio in that he serves as Minister in several government departments, Foreign Affairs and International Development as well as Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. His multi-office position may potentially open the door for new dialog on possible joint international environmental development work with the U.K.

Even though Brexit has taken place, it is still a time of significant transition in the U.K. due the need to determine new domestic processes for U.K. rules and regulations now that they are no longer part of the EU system. The U.K.'s departure from the EU is perceived as increasing the importance of maintaining strong bilateral relationships; the United States is a strategic priority for the U.K. In May 2020, the USTR led the U.S. in the initial round of trade negotiations with U.K. counterparts. While the negotiations did go several rounds, they remain unresolved and there has not yet been an indication that the new USTR team will move forward.

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**Briefing Memo - BILATERAL CALL WITH U.K. MINISTER FOR
ENVIRONMENT *INTERNAL/DELIBERATIVE***

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In terms of environment and climate policy, the U.K. released a Clean Growth Strategy in October 2017, which set out the policies and programs they are pursuing to meet carbon budgets through 2032, while growing the economy and creating jobs. The Strategy projects an increase in “green collar jobs” of 2 million by 2030. In addition, the U.K. released a new Clean Air Strategy in January 2019, aiming to set an ambitious, long-term target to reduce the population’s exposure to particulate matter. In June 2019, the U.K. also passed laws to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, compared with the previous target of at least 80% reduction from 1990 levels.

As part of the U.K. government 2018 waste strategy, the U.K. has indicated working towards eliminating food waste to landfills by 2030. Internationally, the U.K. recently chaired the G7 Resource Efficiency Alliance meeting in late March, focusing on food loss and waste at the household level and providing an opportunity for G7 countries to share their approaches to addressing this issue at the household level.

The U.K. is also keen to demonstrate international leadership in addressing environmental issues by hosting the G7 and 26th Climate Conference of the Parties (COP). In addition to organizing and chairing the upcoming Climate COP, the U.K. has launched 5 climate-related campaigns to advance international climate action. One of these, the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Alliance initiative is holding a virtual Ministerial-level meeting in late April and CEQ has recommended you as the US representative, and if two spots are allowed, Secretary Buttigieg as well.

EPA has met regularly to share perspectives on policy and advance bilateral cooperation. At the working level, areas of cooperation have included partnering and sharing best practices on air quality research and air standards, transportation, HFCs, methane, homeland security/emergency response matters, chemicals, food waste and marine litter. EPA does not have an overarching MOU with Defra, though have cooperation agreements on joint work in air

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quality research and homeland security/emergency response issues (e.g., COVID-19).

V. KEY ISSUES

- U.K. is a leader in addressing climate change and is hosting the upcoming Climate COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021. The U.K has been invited to the Climate Leaders Summit on Earth Day.
- U.K. is also chairing the G7 this year and G7 Environmental Ministerial Meeting will be held virtually on May 21. Climate change and biodiversity are the themes of their G7 Presidency.
- In addition to sharing perspectives and support for our bilateral work, Lord Goldsmith may express interest in renewal of our joint air research cooperation agreement as well as ask about current actions we are taking to address climate change in the U.S.
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VI. NEXT STEPS/UPCOMING DEADLINES

- April 14—Bilateral call with Minister Goldsmith
- April 22—Earth Day Leaders' Summit

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